

Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Person

Quarter 1 – Module 3: Doing Philosophy

Lesson

3

**Doing Philosophical Reflection
on a Concrete Situation from a
Holistic Perspective**



What is It

Let's start by answering these questions: *"What is your idea about critical and analytical thinking? How can you apply the lesson on analytic philosophy in your everyday life?"*

One of the most common beliefs that we hold as "true" is related to a black cat crossing our path. Although we are convinced that this is just a superstitious belief (*n. superstition, means a belief or notion, not based on reason or knowledge*), we

cannot deny that there are a few people who to become safe just do certain rituals to avoid any incident that could be connected with such belief. To philosophize is to hold on beliefs that must be based on reason, beliefs that are rational and not irrational. Examine how the two cultures, the east and the west, developed their philosophy.

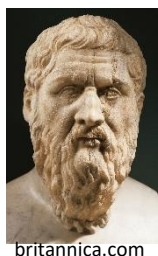
Doing Philosophy: West and East

The Western Philosophy was revolutionary because it went against tradition (*mythology*). They explained nature through man's recognized rationality and ability to coherent thought. The western tradition's quest for knowledge ends for its own sake. From the triumvirates of the Milesians: Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes to other great Greek thinkers, the search for the reality about nature seemingly intended to simply finding out the truth about the "cosmos", but essentially their attempts contributed much in enriching this quest for knowledge.

The Eastern Philosophy while philosophizing, was also practicing religion. There is no *dichotomy* (a division or contrast between two things that are represented as being opposed or entirely different) between man and the objective world. They look at man as being one with the world. *Philosophy is a way of life.* (Philosophers: Mencius, Lao-Tzu, Confucius)

Why do we philosophize?

Many argued on the role of philosophy in our lives. For some, "philosophy is dead" which means that it has no significance now a days. Another some would say that "philosophy is only for philosophers." While still others would claim that regardless of our status in life, whether we study philosophy or not, whether we are philosophers or not, we have the ability to philosophize in so far as we have moments of wonders and doubts. As we reflect on our experiences, we find answers to our questions, and these answers will eventually lead us to another sets of questions, until we realize that we are in our way to never-ending necessity to learn and re-learn as well as discover and rediscover.



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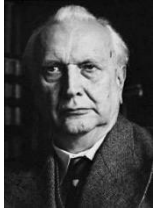
Plato, a Greek philosopher, traced this necessity of man to philosophize to his sense of wonder. According to him, when we confront a particular experience, we have the tendency to wonder why and how things came to be. In other words, we become conscious of the events that happen in our lives which drive us to think, ask questions, and reflect. From a philosophical question, we then develop a philosophical reflection.



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A 15th C. French philosopher, Rene Descartes, traced this necessity of man to philosophize to his sense of doubt. He doubts everything except his own existence. His famous line: "Cogito ergo sum" or "I think therefore I exist" capsulized his philosophy of doubt. His starting point is to reject, to question, and to doubt everything including his own ideas. This contributed much to the critical thinking and analysis in the field of

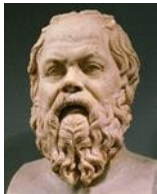
sciences. It gave birth to the scientific hypothesis where something to be concluded as scientific truth, it must undergo a scientific method of testing and verifying the hypothesis. But, the fact that he (Descartes) is thinking, he cannot deny this existence.



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A 20th C. Swiss-German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, traced this necessity of man to philosophize to his sense of experience. For him man is always confronted with a lot of experiences of different kinds, some are pleasant while others are challenging. These experiences challenge his ideas and frameworks, which according to him, are experiences that limit situations. These are often accompanied by feelings of helplessness, anxiety, or dread. Now, for Jaspers, philosophy's role enters because it provides us a means to understand adverse or challenging conditions, and to rise above them and eventually gain new knowledge and perspectives.

We can also trace this necessity of man to philosophize to his sense of love and wisdom. As we etymologically define it, philosophy is love of wisdom. To love wisdom means to have strong desire for truth. A lover of wisdom does not settle for less truth when he knows that he can find something great about a truth. As to its real definition, philosophy searches for the ultimate causes of everything that exists.



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It continues to question the answers as it continues to answer the questions. One of the great philosophers taught us a very significant way of knowing, that is, accepting the fact that a fact is unknown to us. His famous line is "I know that I do not know." The philosopher who popularized this perspective is Socrates. Being wise has its way from being ignorant. By accepting that one is in the state of ignorance that he begins to learn and understand. Philosophical reflection was further enhanced because of his another famous line: "An unexamined life is not worth living". Philosophy therefore is nothing but a way of examining one's life.

Approaches in Doing Philosophy

1. Critical or Analytic Philosophy

Fundamental Tasks:

- a. Analyze and define your fundamental concepts

"Are you aware of the nuances (a subtle differences in or meaning, expression, or sound) in meaning of the use of concepts that you use?"

Example: Which came first? Is it the chicken or is it the egg?

Apply analytic philosophy:

- Understanding verbal disagreement: coming first
"What do you mean by this phrase? In what sense are you using this phrase?"
 1. From the reproductive standpoint: chicken
 2. From the developmental standpoint: egg

b. Criticize your beliefs

*Beliefs are often based on our **prejudices** (pre-convinced opinion that is not **abased on reason or actual experience**).*

Ex. Your bias against Muslims.

“You need philosophy to free yourself from your prejudices”

2. Speculative or Metaphysical Philosophy

- It tries to find an underlying explanation or general principle that could explain reality in its entirety.
- It aims to reach some general conclusions as to the nature of the universe; and as to our position and prospects in it. It is an attempt to think synoptically of all the facts.

Example:

The attempts of the pre-Socratic philosophers to explain reality.

Abstraction: The process of extracting a unifying explanation from the multiplicity of the things around.